

Diverting Food Waste

Most people don't realize how much food they throw away every day — from uneaten leftovers to spoiled produce to parts of fruits and vegetables that could be eaten or repurposed. One-third of all food in the United States goes uneaten. Preventing food from going to waste is one of the easiest and most powerful actions you can take to save money, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and conserving natural resources.

Benefits of Preventing Wasted Food

Save money buy only what you need, eating what you buy, and avoid throwing away food.

Conserve resources and energy. When food is wasted, the land, water, energy, and other inputs that are used in producing, processing, transporting, preparing, storing, and disposing the food are wasted as well.

Reduce GHG emissions. When food decomposes in a landfill, methane, a potent greenhouse gas, is emitted. Municipal solid waste landfills are the third-largest source of human-related methane emissions in the U.S. and food waste is responsible for 58% of landfill emissions.



Ways to prevent food waste :

- **Plan ahead for shopping** — Making a list with weekly meals in mind can save you money and time. If you only buy what you expect to use, you will be more likely to eat it all.
- **Properly store fruits and vegetables for maximum freshness;** they'll taste better and last longer, helping you to eat more of them before they go bad.
- **Learn the difference** between [“sell-by,” “use-by,” “best-by,” and expiration dates](#)



- “Best if Used By/Before” date indicates when a product will be of best flavor or quality.
- “Sell-By” date tells the store how long to display the product for sale.
- “Use-By” date is the last date recommended for the use of the product while at peak quality.
- “Freeze-By” date indicates when a product should be frozen to maintain peak quality.
- **Participate in Gleaning;** Gleaning is the act of collecting excess fresh foods from farms, gardens, farmers markets, grocers, restaurants, state/county fairs, or any other sources in order to provide it to those in need. Contact [FeedHV](#) for more information. FeedHV is The Hudson Valley’s food rescue and harvesting network dedicated to meeting the needs of neighbors while mitigating the impacts of food waste.
- **Compost—** [Compost food scraps](#) rather than throwing them away. For more information on composting in Dutchess County, contact the [Division of Solid Waste Management](#).

